METHOD

OF DRAWING

FOR USE

IN SCHOOLS AND HIGH SCHOOLS

CONTAINS

THE ANALYTICAL TEACHING OF THE ART OF DRAWING
AND PROPORTIONS OF THE HUMAN FIGURE BASED ON THE TRADITION
OF ANTIQUITY AND THE GREAT MASTERS

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This book presents the complete English translation of Professor Adolphe Yvon's book, *Méthode de Dessin* (1867).

The translation credit goes to numerous individuals around the world who participated in the project in response to a request I made on my blog. I have edited their translations, on occasion, in keeping with contemporary language and the context of the book.* Like the original, this translation is now in the public domain. You may use it in any way you wish. No credit to me is necessary.

The original book is tabloid size and I have therefore sized this PDF similarly. This will allow readers to see the plates as close to the original size and quality as possible.

At the time of publication, the original scans are available through various posts on my blog:
studiorousar.com/category/instruction/methode-de-dessin/

Thanks to all who helped out!

Darren R. Rousar
2014

* Note that I have not translated anatomical names.

Method of Drawing by Adolphe Yvon

Forward

The goal of teaching drawing in the high schools and colleges is to put students in the position of applying and developing, later in their careers, the knowledge that they have acquired in this interesting branch of their studies.

It is to satisfy these conditions that the Government schools require drawing, to a certain degree, for the admission of their prospective students.

However, one could not reach this goal simply by copying skillfully made crosshatched prints without learning the fundamentals which underlie the laws of drawing. It is also to be feared that the direction of one's ideas would become distorted or sent down the wrong path by such work, as is often the case when the student succeeds in such endeavors early on.

On the other hand, studying high aesthetics and applying its concerns to sort and suggest, using the great works of the masters as models, is surely premature. In fact, some opinions do not support such models, whose infinite diversity still troubles artists even after a whole career dedicated to the search for Truth and Beauty!

What is needed is a clear and logical method of teaching which provides young people with the means to understand and apply the elementary problems of the art of drawing.

The foundation of this teaching will be an intimate knowledge of the principle geometric figures, such as the vertical line, the horizontal, the oblique at all angles, the circle, the oval, etc. — All forms are nothing but a succession of these figures.

However, it would be dangerous to push to excess this reduction of forms, and especially human forms, to geometric shapes. The difficulty of such operations are likely to repel rather than help the students in their studies.

It would also be a mistake to believe in the discovery of a method for teaching drawing, based solely on observation, in only a few lessons.

Continuous, serious study is the only way of learning the principles of art in which mathematical formulas are relevant only to a small degree and then solely as a support.

The method that should be followed for drawing, either from life or from references, consists in positioning what we want to achieve by the means of simple lines, whose carefully thought-out angles (compared to the vertical and the horizontal) first give the general directions of movement. The vertical and horizontal lines must be drawn before anything else, to serve as guides, as can be seen from the examples in this book.

Once these lines are in position, the student will then use them as a basis to consider the principal divisions of length and width. A student cannot be too careful with this preparatory work: the success of his drawing will depend on it.

It is evident, clearly, that if these principal lines and proportions are correct, the rest will be nothing but a question of details; and these, even if clumsily done, will not be able to take away from the overall character and fidelity of the drawing.

The references used, especially in beginning lessons, should as much as possible be accompanied by the main divisions and reference marks which will facilitate copying.

In the more advanced classes, it will be a good idea to vary the references by adding draped or clothed figures, groups, etc.

The diagrams on the following pages show examples at different stages of development:

-The placement, with the main divisions
-The refined contour
-The values

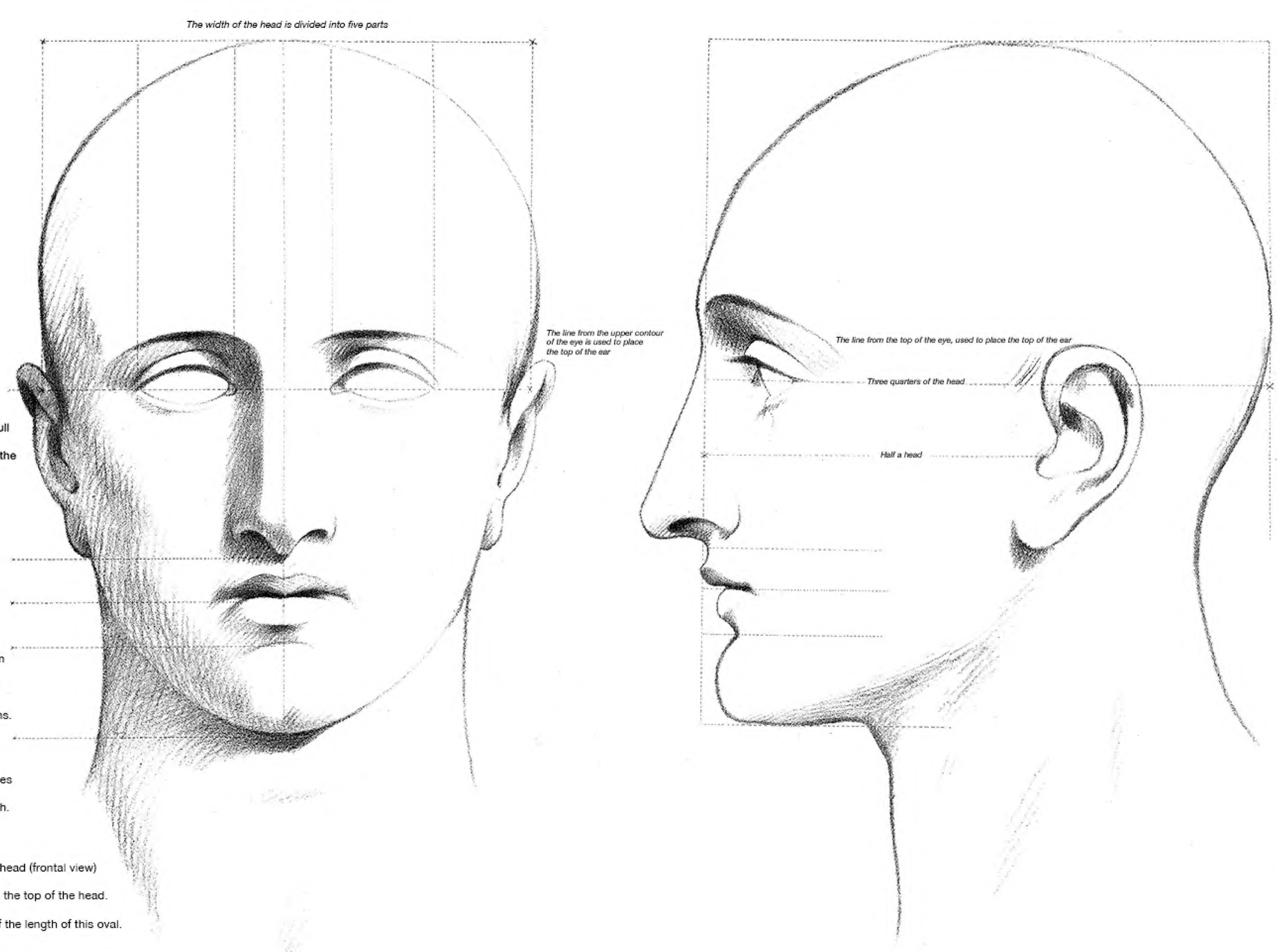
To draw the human figure, it is essential to have knowledge of certain proportions or ratios of common lengths and widths.

Almost all masters created for themselves a scale of proportions (which we call a “canon”), applied to the human figure. Among the most famous we can cite Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci.

We could not do better than to be inspired by such predecessors. However, for the studies which we are setting for ourselves, these scales are, for the most part, overloaded with complications. It will be necessary only to extract from them the principal rules.

We have thought it useful to complete this book by giving the écorché and skeleton of the two male figures contained within. Knowledge of bones and surface anatomy is invaluable in understanding the human form.

Before finishing this introduction, we cannot overemphasize that you should draw as much as possible, either from live models, casts, or any inanimate objects. The problems are invariably the same, regardless of the source. They demand above all, a laborious and constant education of the eye: once acquired, the hand will soon become an instrument, if not always dexterous, at least relatively accurate.



Canon of the Head

1.

The halfway point between the top of the skull and the bottom of the chin gives the line for the eyes taken at the tear ducts.

2.

The halfway point between the eye line and the bottom of the chin gives the point at which the bottom of the nose joins the face.

3.

The halfway point between where the bottom of the nose joins the face and the bottom of the chin gives the point where the chin begins.

4.

The halfway point between these last two lines gives the position of the corners of the mouth.

5.

The widest width of the oval describing the head (frontal view) is at a point a quarter of the way down from the top of the head. The width should be about three quarters of the length of this oval.

6.

One fifth of this width gives the length of the eye, the width of the space between the eyes, and the width from the outer corner of the eye to the line that describes the widest part of the head.

7.

The ear falls between two lines, commencing from the top contour of the eye and the bottom of the nose.

8.

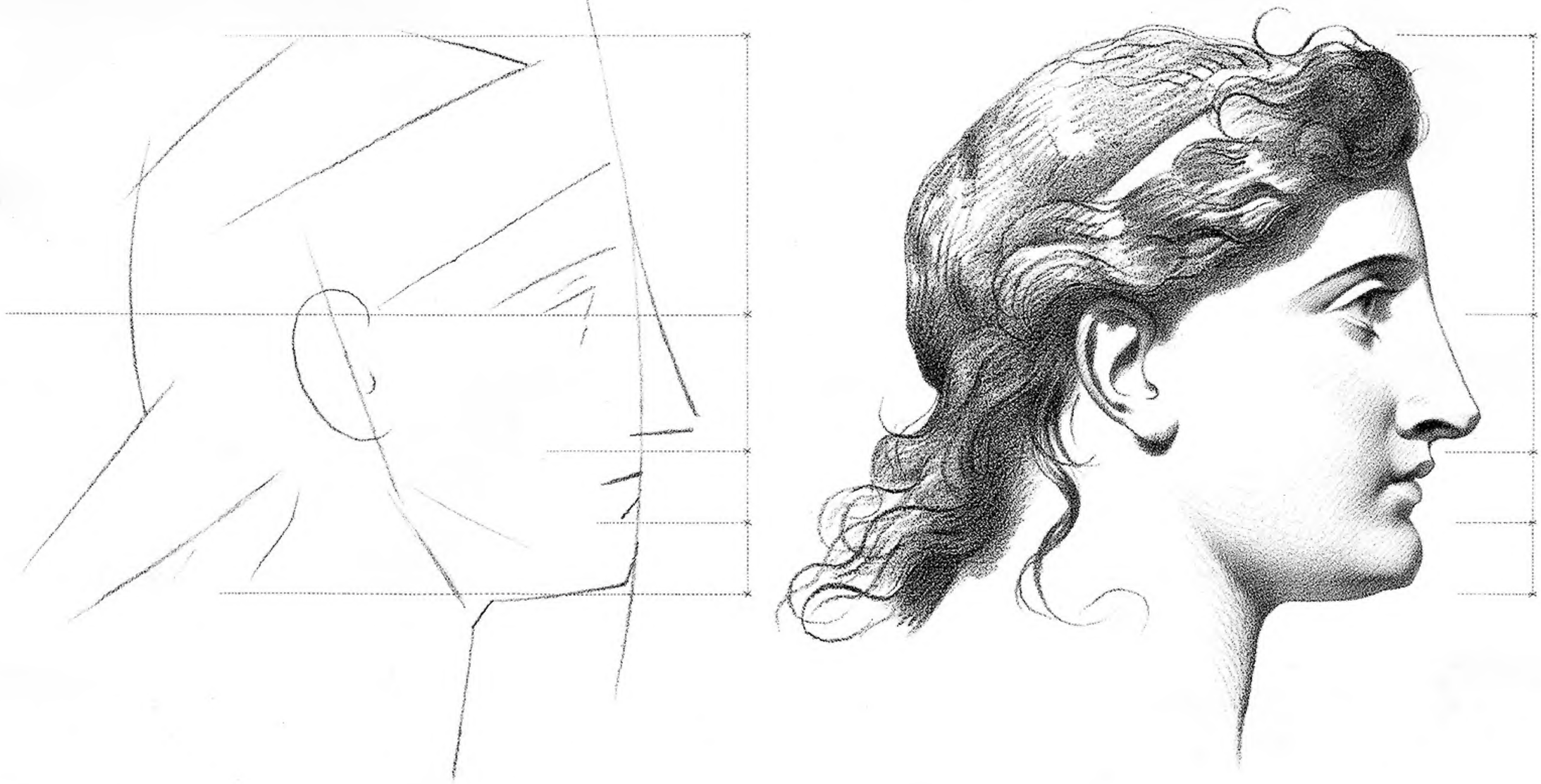
In profile, from the tear duct to the back of the head is three quarters of the head.

9.

In profile, the hole of the ear falls halfway between the lines describing the top and the bottom of the nose.

To draw a head, one must, before starting, understand the principle proportions. These drawings give the general proportions. However, they should be considered as guidelines in the construction of a head, and note must be taken of the infinite variety of variations presented by nature.

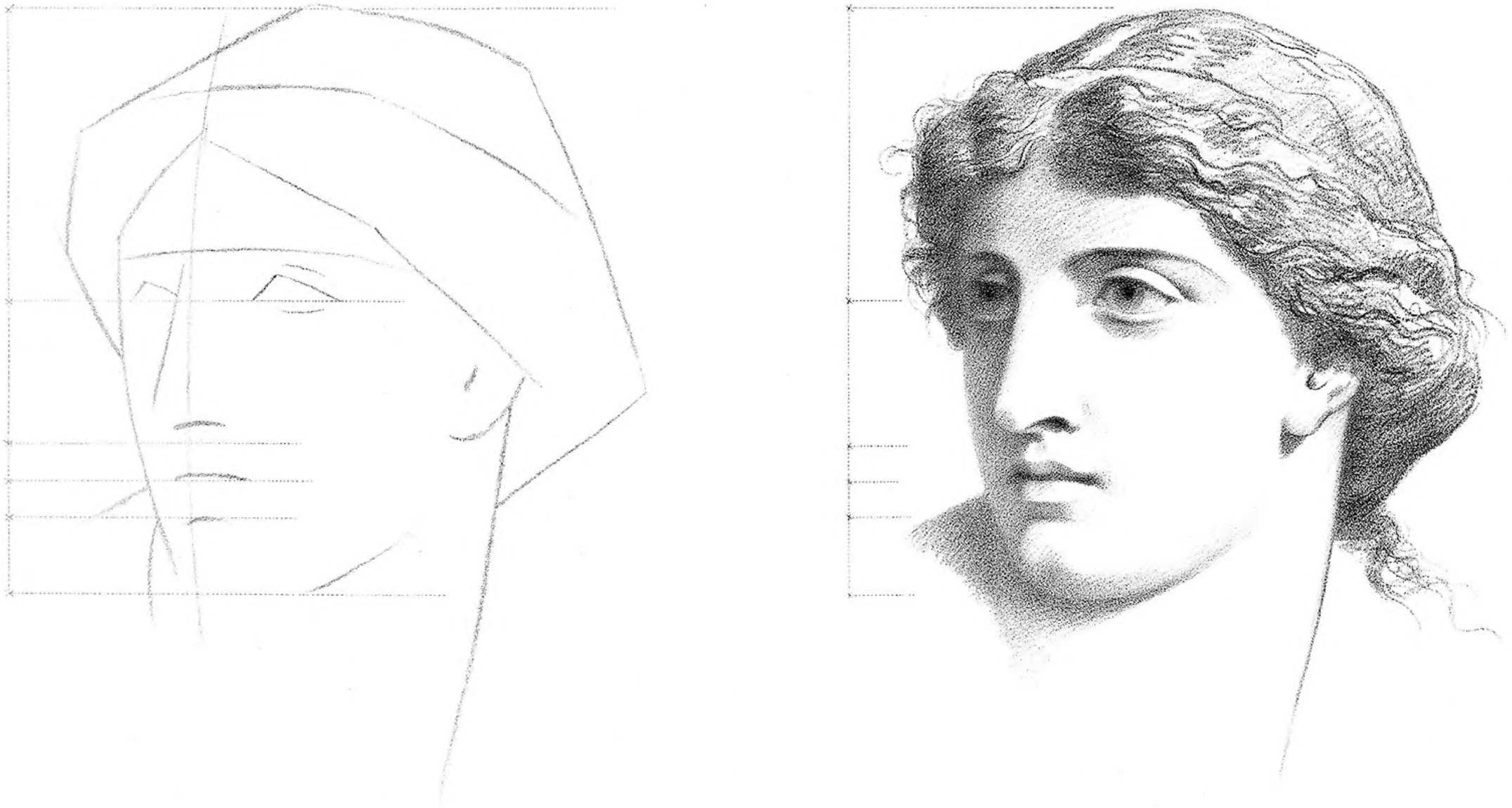
Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris.



Layout and blocking-in of a head seen in profile

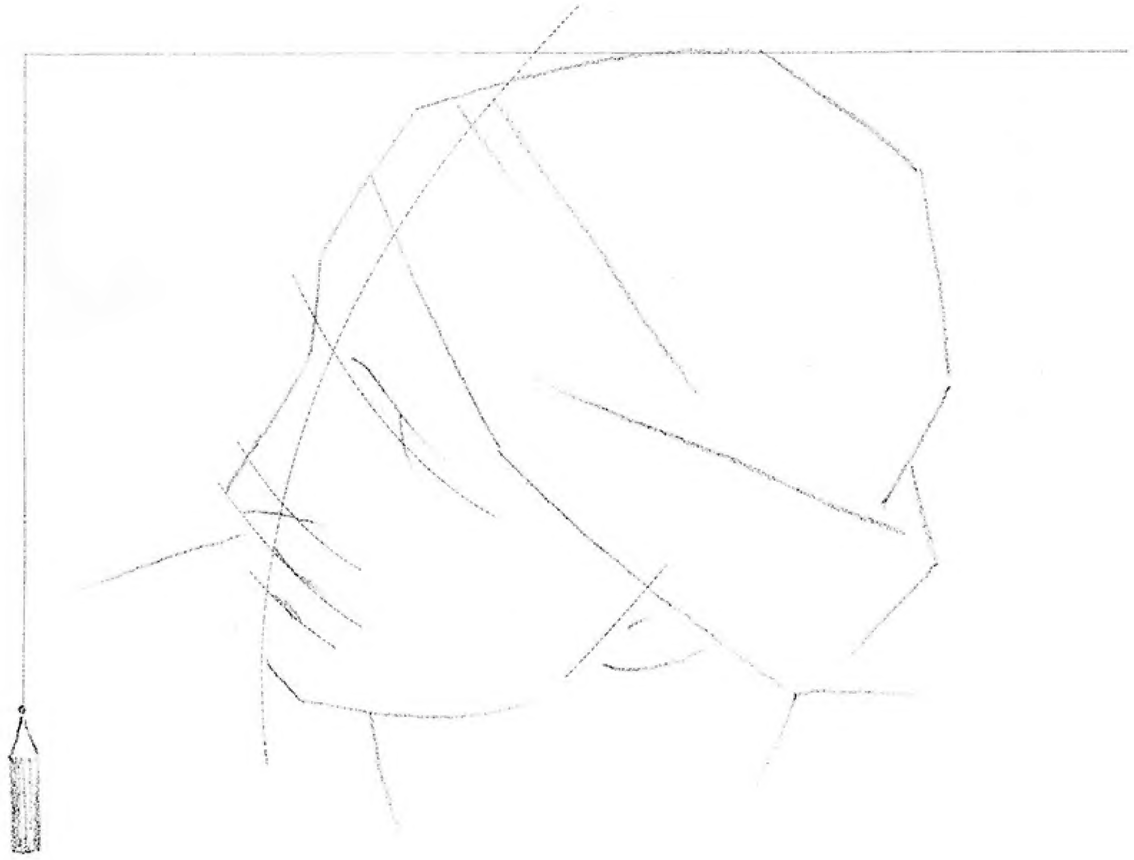
The method to follow for this drawing consists in sketching in the main lines of the head, the angles of which are carefully compared to the horizontal and vertical guidelines which will give the main directions of movement. These vertical and horizontal lines must be drawn before any other, in order to serve as guides, as you can see above. Using these reference lines, the student should mark the main divisions of length and width. The rest simply consists in adding the details.

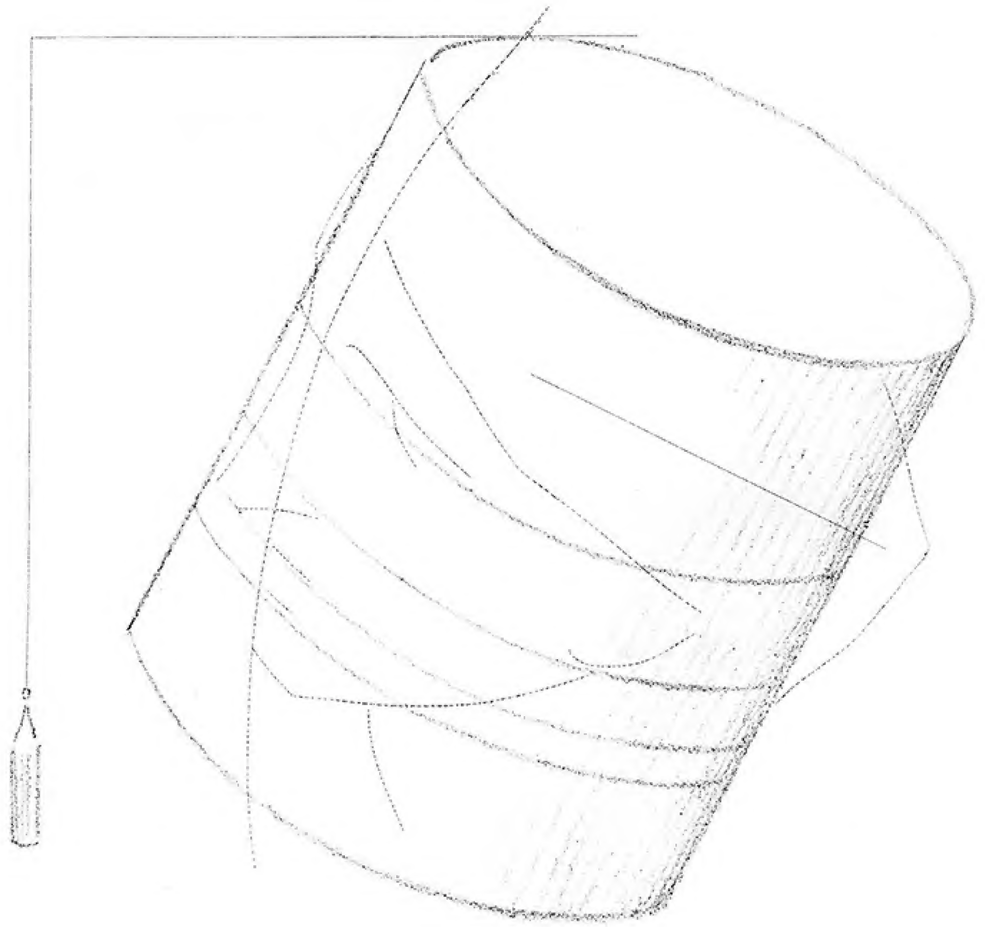
Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris



Layout and block-in of a head as seen from a three-quarter angle

(This is the same method as used in Plate 2)





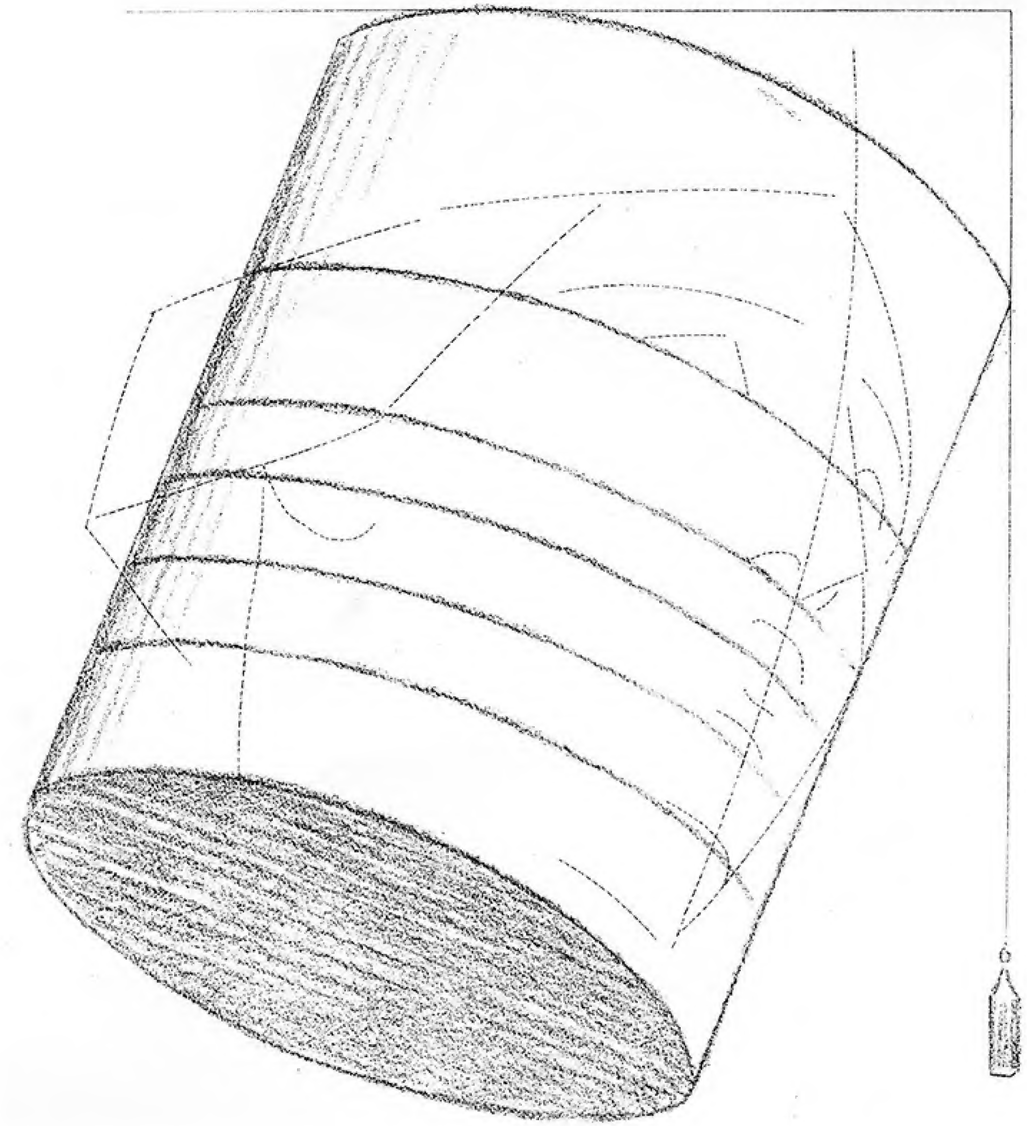
The method used to indicate the lateral divisions of a head, when seen either from below or from above, is to imagine the head as a cylinder. The main divisions, as previously seen in Plate 3, are drawn transversely across the cylinder. As seen from above, these lines take a concave shape, as seen from below, a convex shape. These divisions, at all angles of the head, should be burnt into the memory of the student.

This plate is an example of a head as seen from above. Its lines are concave.

Imp Lemercier et C.ie Paris

Line and shadow indications on the head which has been set up on plate 4.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris.



When drawing the head it is helpful to view it as a cylinder, as was shown in Plate 4.

This final plate shows an example of the head as viewed from below. The guidelines are convex.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris

Line and shadow indications on the head which has been set up on plate 6.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris

See plate 4 for the demonstration of transversal lines.

Here, as the head is seen from below, the divisions take a convex form.

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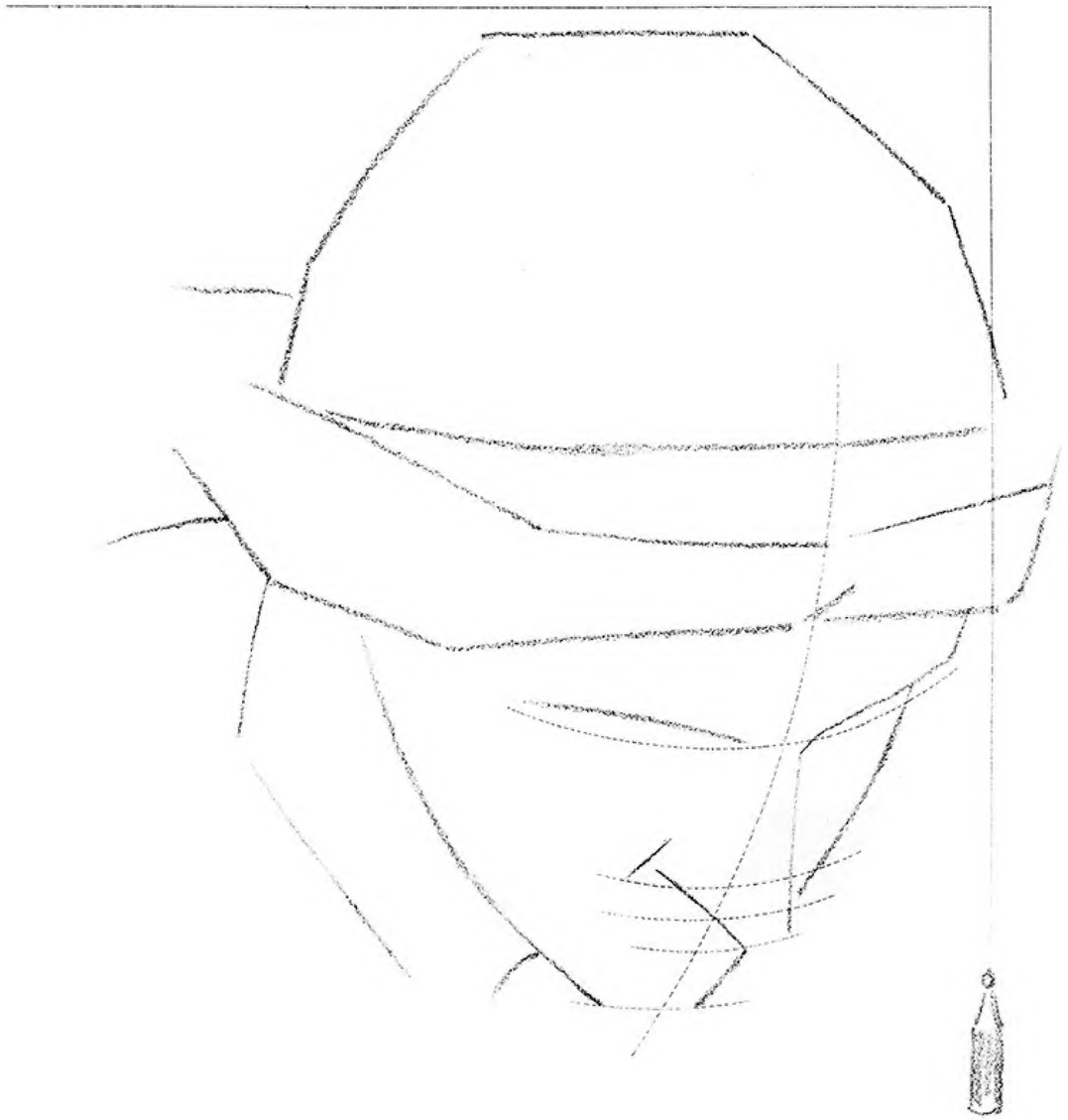

See plate 4 for the demonstration of transversal lines.

Here, as the head is seen from below, the divisions take a concave form.

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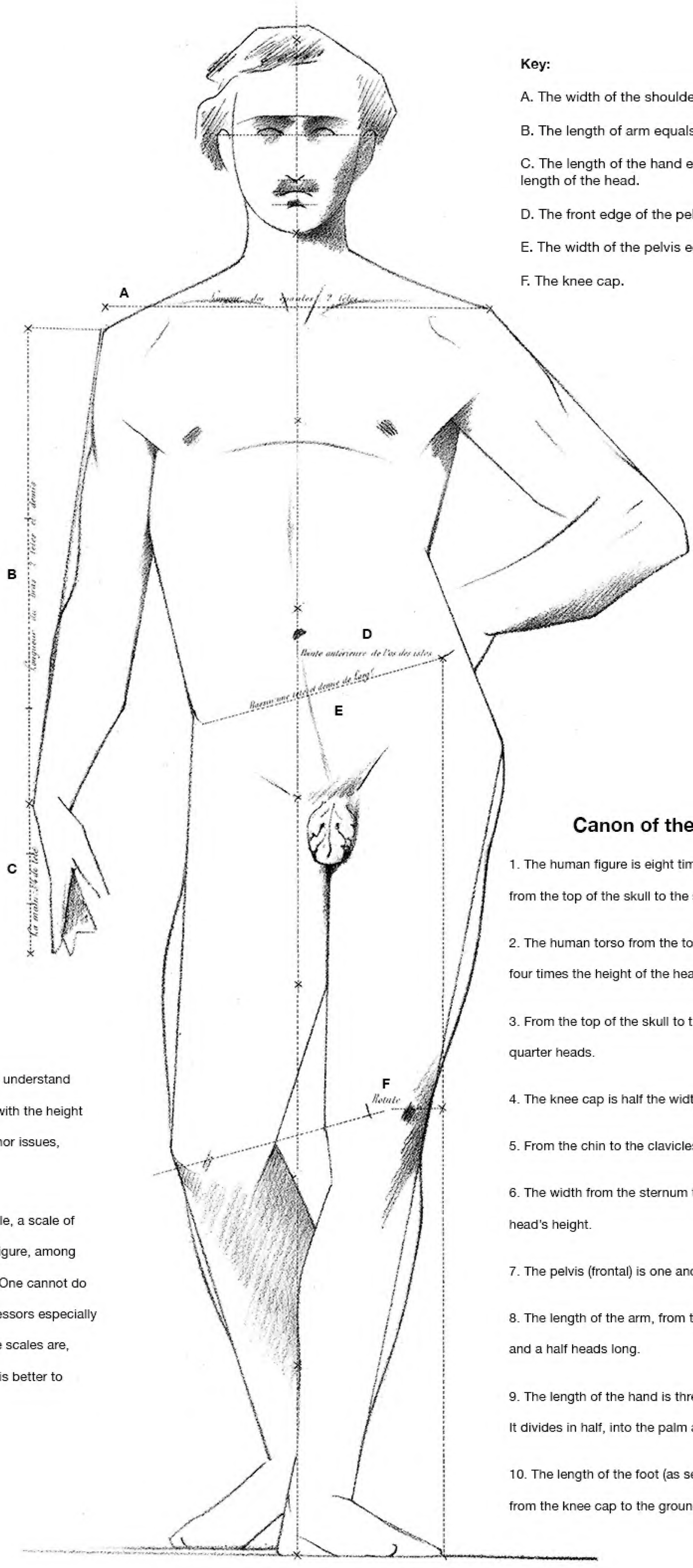
Values in light and dark masses as in Plate 9.

Values in light and dark masses as in Plate 8.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris



Key:

A. The width of the shoulders equals the length of two heads.

B. The length of arm equals two and a half head lengths.

C. The length of the hand equals three quarters of the length of the head.

D. The front edge of the pelvis.

E. The width of the pelvis equals one and a half heads.

F. The knee cap.

Canon of the male figure.

1. The human figure is eight times the height of the head, from the top of the skull to the soles of the feet.

2. The human torso from the top of the skull to the genitals are four times the height of the head.

3. From the top of the skull to the pelvis is three and a quarter heads.

4. The knee cap is half the width of the pelvis.

5. From the chin to the clavicles are half a head's height.

6. The width from the sternum to each shoulder is a full head's height.

7. The pelvis (frontal) is one and a half heads in width.

8. The length of the arm, from the shoulder to the wrist, is two and a half heads long.

9. The length of the hand is three quarters the length of the head. It divides in half, into the palm and the fingers.

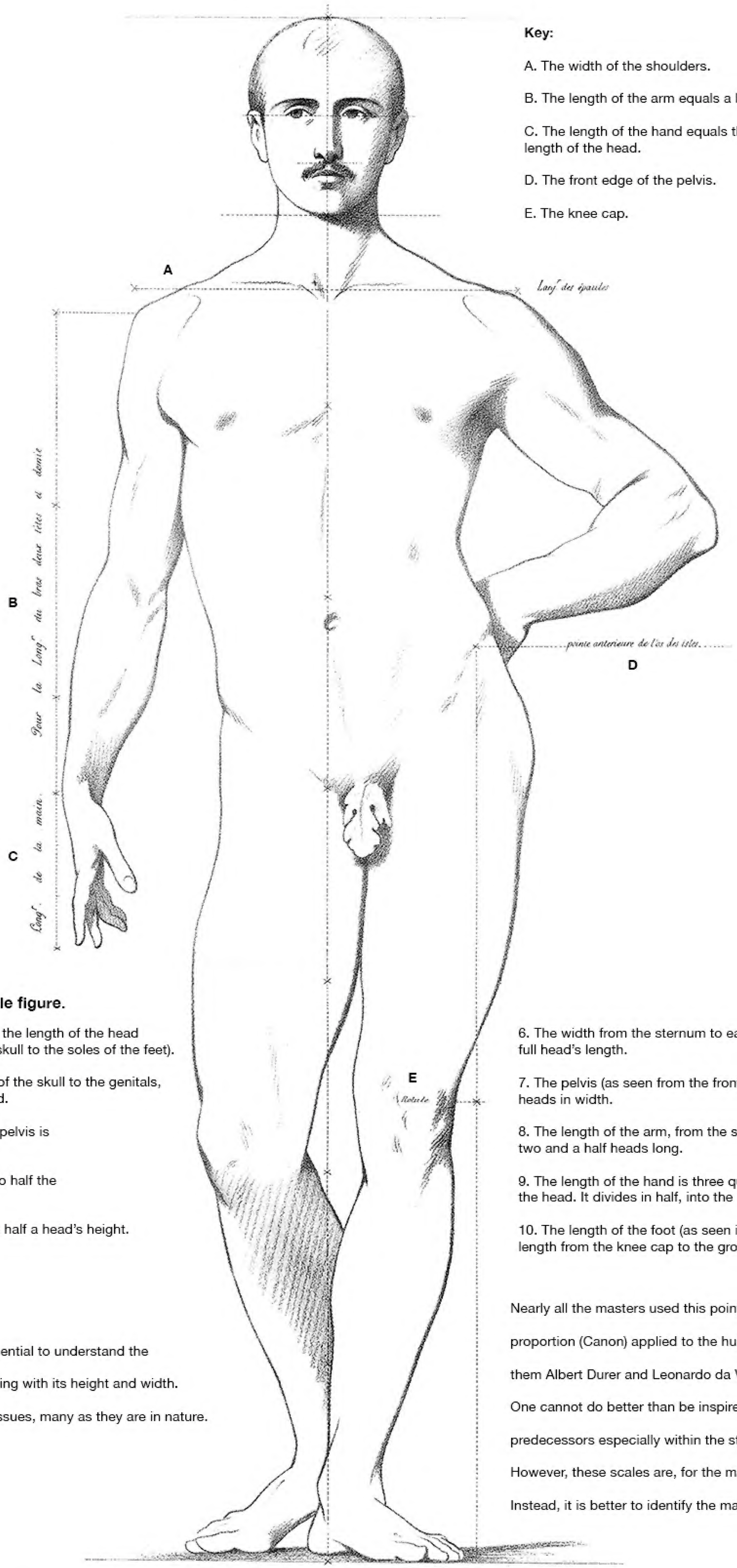
10. The length of the foot (as seen in profile) is half the length from the knee cap to the ground.

To draw the human figure, it is essential to understand the key elements of proportion in dealing with the height and width. Do not get caught up in the minor issues, many as they are in nature.

Nearly all the masters used this point of rule, a scale of proportion (Canon) applied to the human figure, among them Albert Durer and Leonardo da Vinci. One cannot do better than be inspired from these predecessors especially within the study proposed. However, these scales are, for the most part, complicated. Instead, it is better to identify the main rules.

This plate shows the block-in of the figure, in line; Plate 12 will show the next stage of the figure, with the block-in corrected; Plate 13 will show the modeled figure; Plate 14 will show the écorché; Plate 15 will show the skeleton.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris



Key:

A. The width of the shoulders.

B. The length of the arm equals a half heads in length.

C. The length of the hand equals three quarters of the length of the head.

D. The front edge of the pelvis.

E. The knee cap.

Canon of the male figure.

1. The human figure is eight times the length of the head (as measured from the top of the skull to the soles of the feet).

2. The human torso, from the top of the skull to the genitals, is four times the length of the head.

3. From the top of the skull to the pelvis is three and a quarter head lengths.

4. The width of the knee is equal to half the width of the pelvis.

5. From the chin to the clavicles is half a head's height.

6. The width from the sternum to each shoulder is a full head's length.

7. The pelvis (as seen from the front) is one and a half heads in width.

8. The length of the arm, from the shoulder to the wrist, is two and a half heads long.

9. The length of the hand is three quarters the length of the head. It divides in half, into the palm and the fingers.

10. The length of the foot (as seen in profile) is half the length from the knee cap to the ground.

To draw the human figure, it is essential to understand the key elements of proportion in dealing with its height and width.

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One cannot do better than be inspired from these predecessors especially within the study proposed.

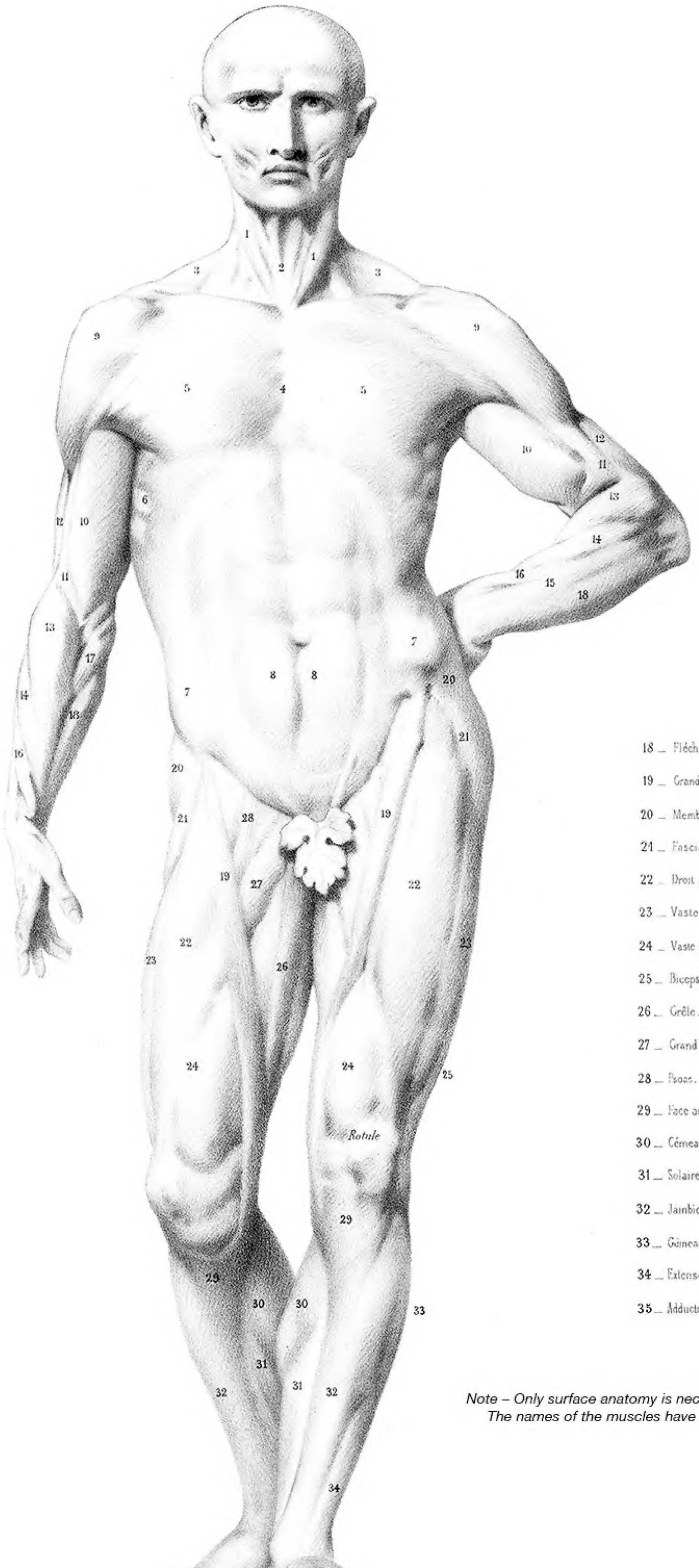
However, these scales are, for the most part, complicated.

Instead, it is better to identify the main rules.

Plate 11 shows the block-in of the figure, in line; Plate 13 shows the modeled figure; Plate 14 shows the écorché; Plate 15 shows the skeleton.

The modeled figure based on the layout of Plate 11; the line drawing in Plate 12; the écorché in Plate 14 and the skeleton in Plate 15.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris

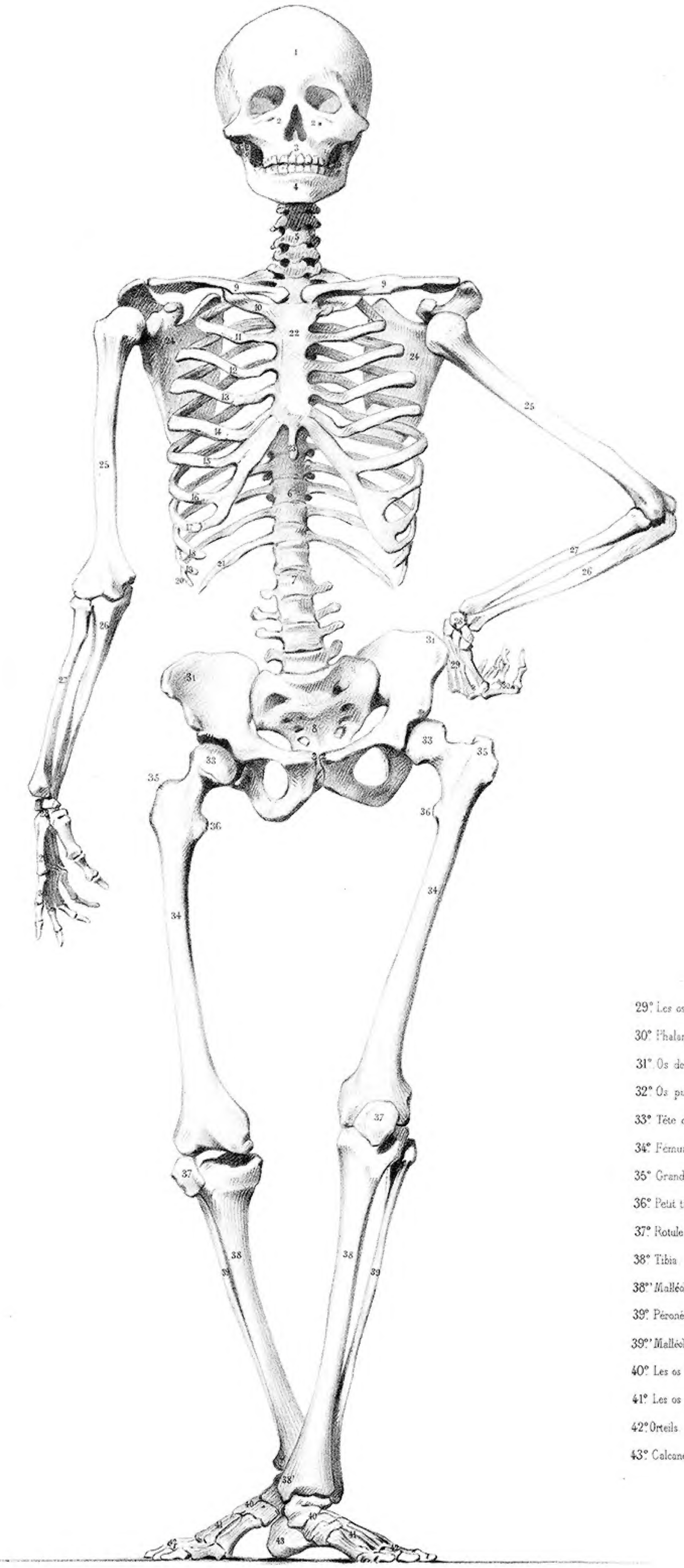


1 _ Mastoïde.
2 _ Sternoïde.
3 _ Trapèze.
4 _ Sternum.
5 _ Pectoral.
6 _ Grand dentelé.
7 _ Oblique externe.
8 _ Droit
9 _ Deltoïde
10 _ Biceps
11 _ Brachial
12 _ Triceps brachial.
13 _ Long supinateur.
14 _ Extenseur supérieur du carpe.
15 _ Extenseur des doigts.
16 _ Extenseur du pouce.
17 _ Rond pronateur.
18 _ Fléchisseur du carpe.
19 _ Grand couturier
20 _ Membraneux.
21 _ Fascia lata.
22 _ Droit antérieur
23 _ Vaste externe
24 _ Vaste interne.
25 _ Biceps de la cuisse.
26 _ Grêle.
27 _ Grand adducteur.
28 _ Psoas.
29 _ Face antérieure du Tibia.
30 _ Céreau interne.
31 _ Solaire.
32 _ Jambier antérieur.
33 _ Gémeau externe.
34 _ Extenseur des orteils.
35 _ Adducteur de l'orteil.

Note – Only surface anatomy is necessary for painters.
The names of the muscles have been simplified.

The écorché of the layout figure seen in Plate 11; the line drawing in Plate 12; the modeled figure in Plate 13 and the skeleton in Plate 15.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris

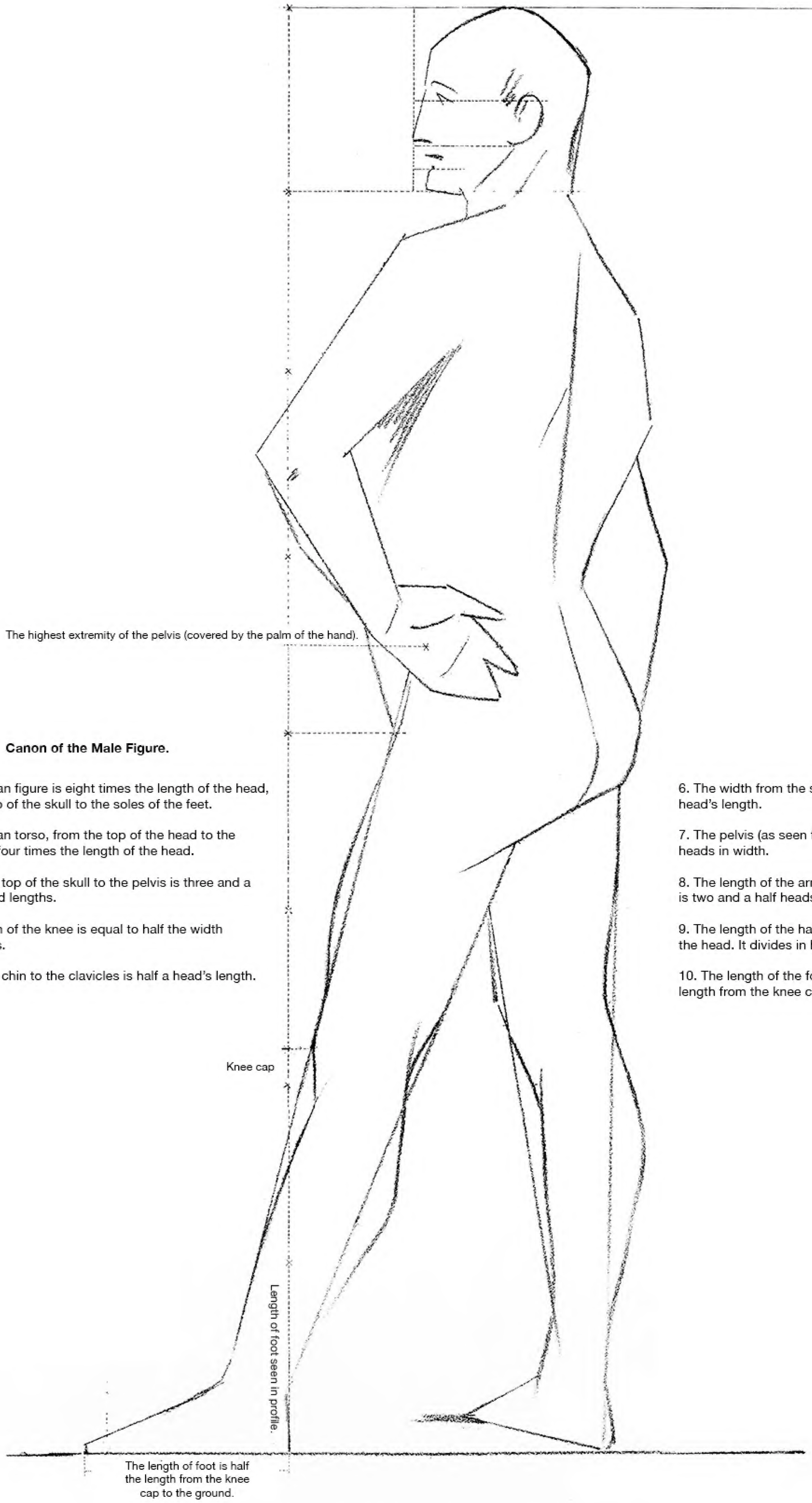


Nomenclature des os du Squelette.

1°. Os coronal.
2°. Os jugal.
3°. Mâchoire supérieure.
4°. Mâchoire inférieure.
5°. Vertèbres du cou, au nombre de sept.
6°. Vertèbres du dos, au nombre de douze.
7°. Vertèbres des reins, au nombre de cinq.
8°. Os sacrum.
9°. Clavicules.
10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21°. Les côtes.
22°. Sternum.
23°. Cartilage Xiphoide.
24°. Omoplate.
25°. Humérus.
26°. Cubitus.
27°. Radius.
28°. Les os du carpe.
29°. Les os du méta carpe.
30°. Phalanges.
31°. Os des isles.
32°. Os pubis.
33°. Tête du fémur.
34°. Fémur.
35°. Grand trochanter.
36°. Petit trochanter.
37°. Rotule.
38°. Tibia.
38°'. Malléole interne.
39°. Péroné.
39°'. Malléole externe.
40°. Les os du tarse.
41°. Les os du métatarse.
42°. Orteils.
43°. Calcaneum.

The skeleton of the layout figure seen in Plate 11; the line drawing in Plate 12;
the modeled figure in Plate 13 and the écorché in Plate 14.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris



Canon of the Male Figure.

1. The human figure is eight times the length of the head, from the top of the skull to the soles of the feet.

2. The human torso, from the top of the head to the genitals, is four times the length of the head.

3. From the top of the skull to the pelvis is three and a quarter head lengths.

4. The width of the knee is equal to half the width of the pelvis.

5. From the chin to the clavicles is half a head's length.

6. The width from the sternum to each shoulder is a full head's length.

7. The pelvis (as seen from the front) is one and a half heads in width.

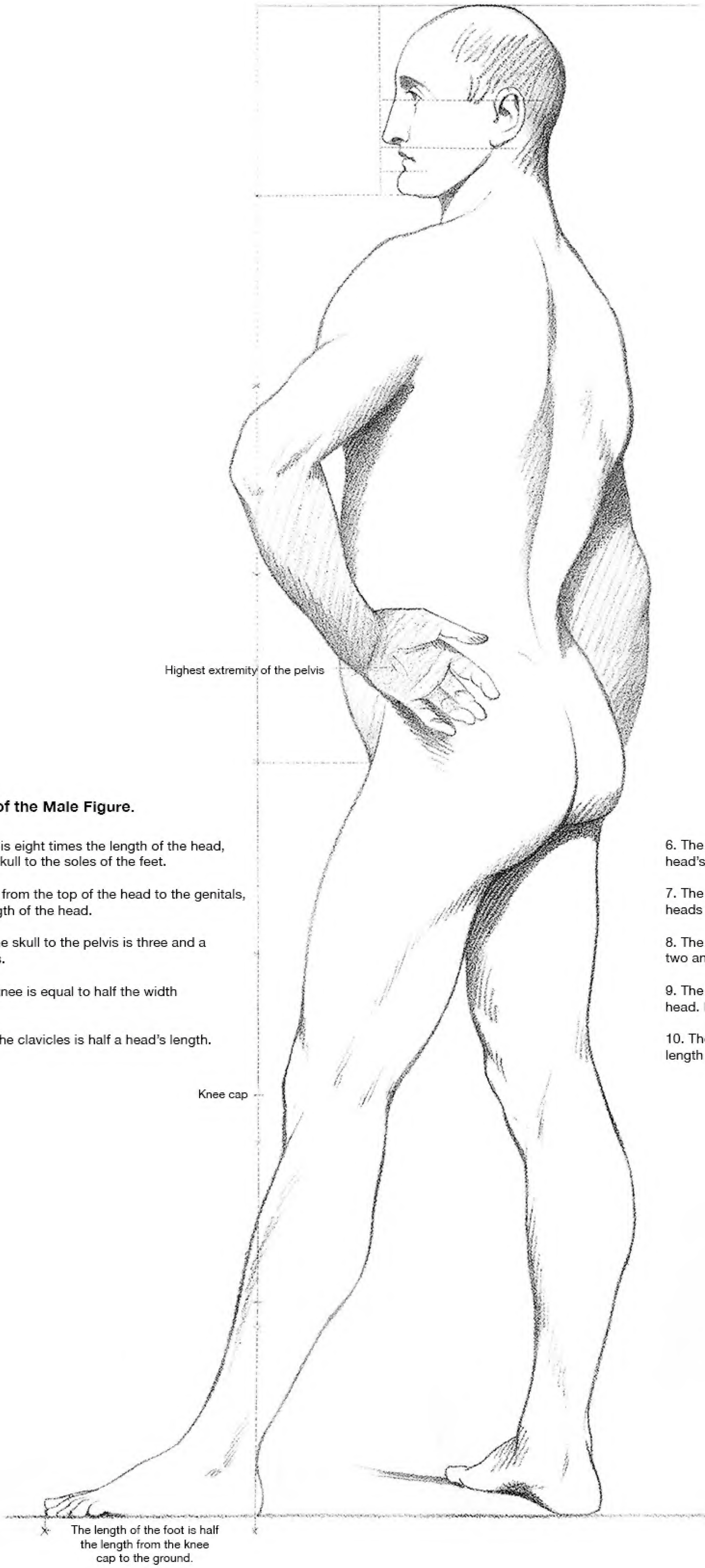
8. The length of the arm, from the shoulder to the wrist, is two and a half heads long.

9. The length of the hand is three quarters the length of the head. It divides in half, into the palm and fingers.

10. The length of the foot (as seen in profile) is half the length from the knee cap to the ground.

The layout, in line, of the figure in Plate 17; the modeled figure, Plate 18; the écorché, Plate 19 and the skeleton, Plate 20.

Imp Lemercier et Cie de Saint Sp Paris



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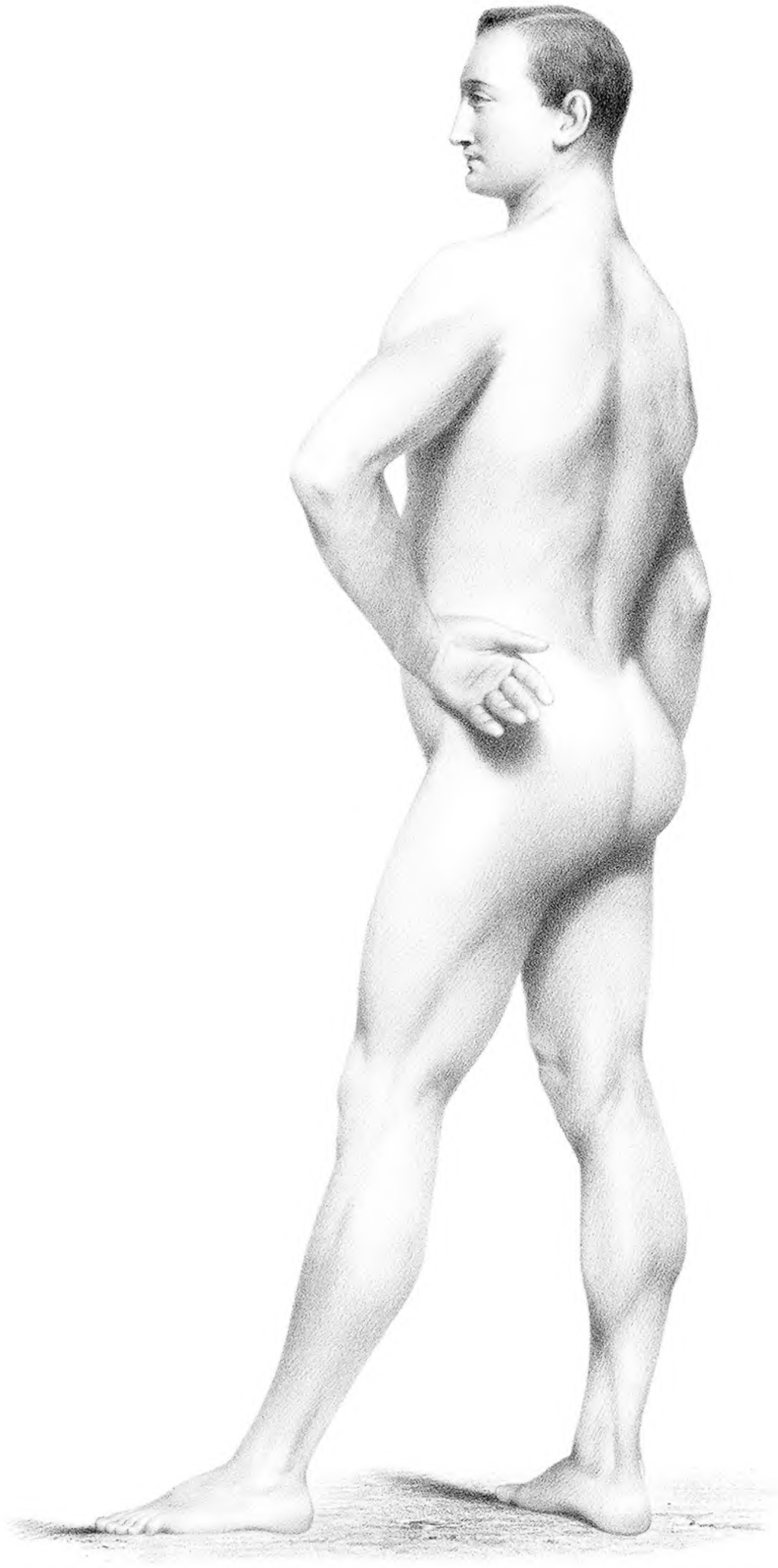
8. The length of the arm, from the shoulder to the wrist, is two and a half heads long.

9. The length of the hand is three quarters the length of the head. It divides in half, into the palm and fingers.

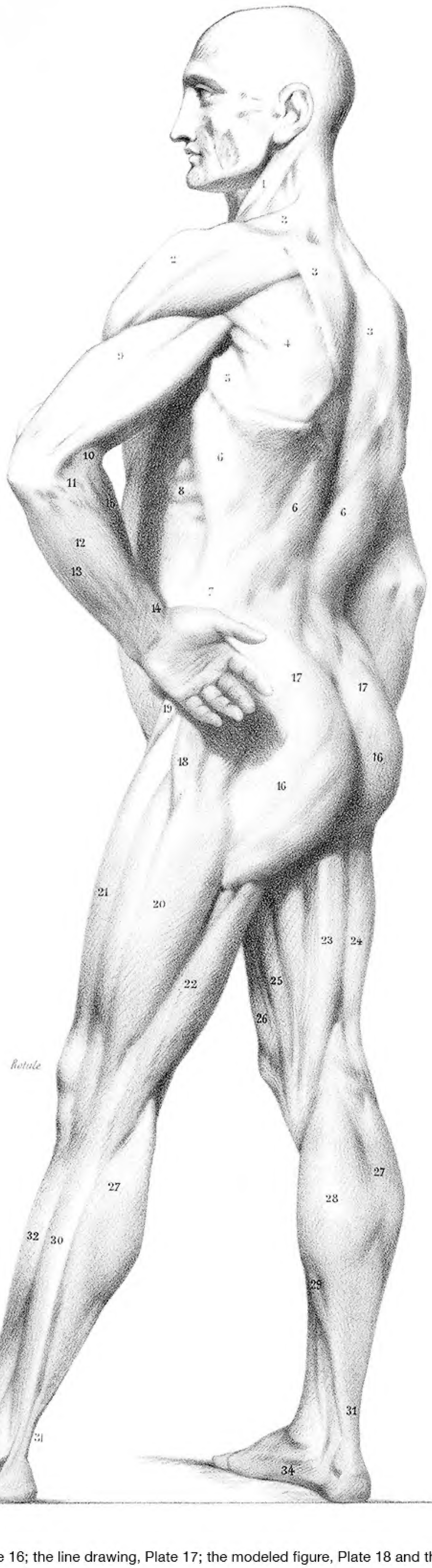
10. The length of the foot (as seen in profile) is half the length from the knee cap to the ground.

The line drawing of the layout figure which we have seen in Plate 16, Plate 18 is the modeled figure, Plate 19 is the écorché and the skeleton is Plate 20.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris



The modeled figure based on the layout in Plate 16; the line drawing in Plate 17; the écorché in Plate 19 and the skeleton in Plate 20.



1 _ Mastoïde .

2 _ Deltoïde .

3 _ Trapèze .

4 _ Sous-épineux .

5 _ Petit rond ou abaisseur .

6 _ Grand dorsal .

7 _ Oblique externe .

8 _ Grand dentelé .

9 _ Triceps brachial .

10 _ Brachial .

11 _ Rond pronateur .

12 _ Fléchisseur du Carpe .

13 _ Palmaire

14 _ Extenseur du pouce .

15 _ Long supinateur .

16 _ Grand fessier .

17 _ Second fessier .

18 _ Fascia-lata .

19 _ Grand couturier .

20 _ Vaste exter .

21 _ Droit antérieur .

22 _ Biceps de la cuisse .

23 _ Demi membraneux .

24 _ Triceps .

25 _ Grêle .

26 _ Vaste interne .

27 _ Gémeau externe .

28 _ Gémeau interne .

29 _ Solaire .

30 _ Péronnier .

31 _ Tendon d'Achille .

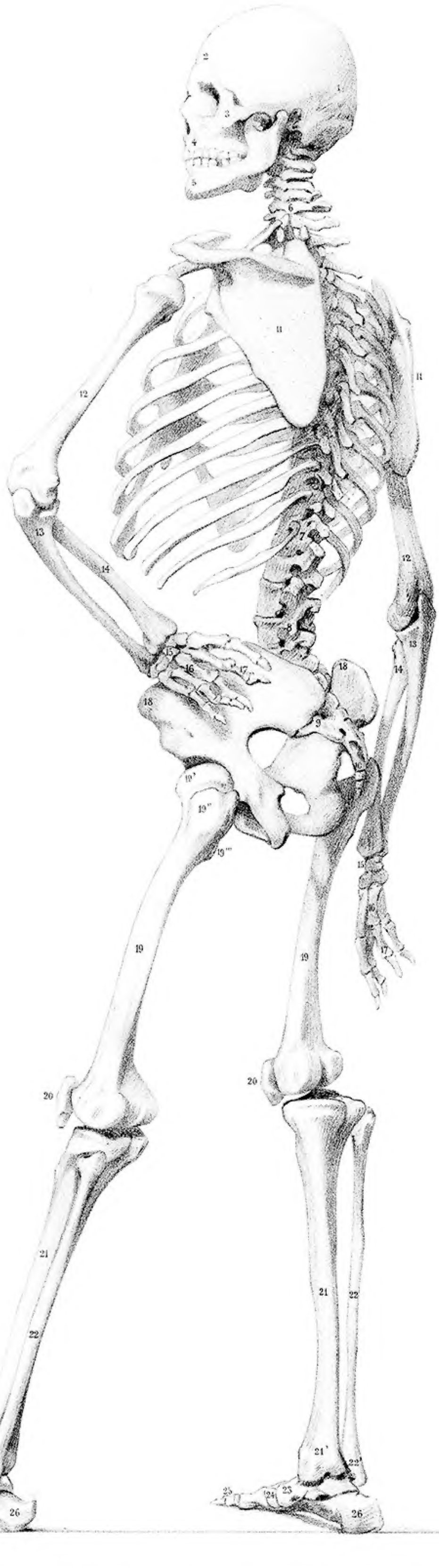
32 _ Jambier Antérieur .

33 _ Extenseur des Orteils .

34 _ Adducteur de l'orteil .

The écorché of the layout figure in Plate 16; the line drawing, Plate 17; the modeled figure, Plate 18 and the skeleton, Plate 20.

Imp Lemercier et Cie Paris



1°_ Occiptal

2°_ Coronal.

3°_ Os Jugal.

4°_ Mâchoire supérieure.

5°_ Mâchoire inférieure.

6°_ Vertèbres du cou, au nombre de sept.

7°_ Vertèbres du dos, au nombre de douze.

8°_ Vertèbres des reins au nombre de cinq.

9°_ Vertèbres de l'os sacrum au nombre de six.

10°_ Vertèbres du coccix, au nombre de quatre.

11°_ Omoplate.

12°_ Humérus.

13°_ Cubitus.

14°_ Radius.

15°_ Les os du carpe.

16°_ Les os du méta carpe.

17°_ Les phalanges.

18°_ Os des isles.

19°_ Fémur.

19°'_ Tête du fémur.

19°''_ Grand trochanter.

19°'''_ Petit trochanter.

20°_ Rotule.

21°_ Tibia.

21°'_ Malléole interne.

22°_ Péroné.

22°'_ Malléole externe.

23°_ Les os du tarse.

24°_ Les os du métatarse.

25°_ Orteils.

26°_ Calcanéum.

The skeleton of the layout figure for Plate 16; the line drawing, Plate 17; the modeled figure, Plate 18; and the écorché Plate 19.

Canon of the Child Figure.

1. The child's height is five head lengths.

2. There are three head lengths from the top of the skull to the genitals.

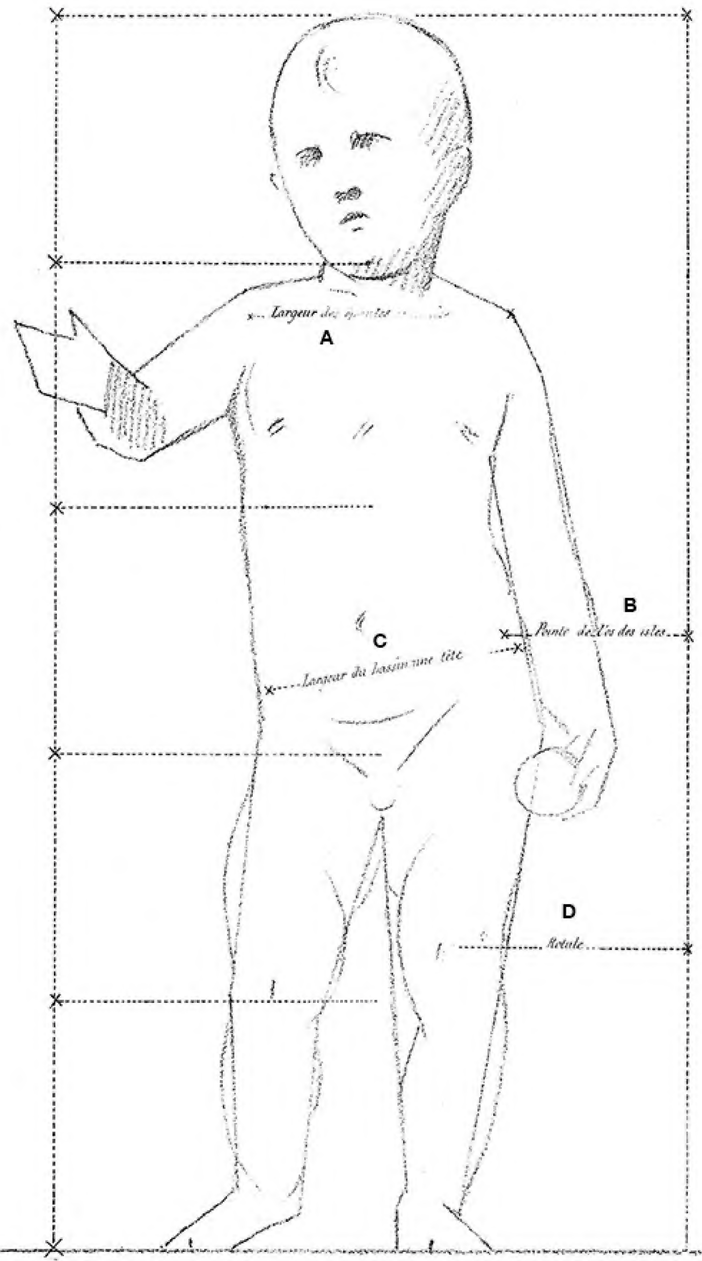
3. The height from the top of the skull to the pelvis is half the height of the total figure.

4. The height from the pelvis to the knee cap is half the height, from the pelvis to the ground.

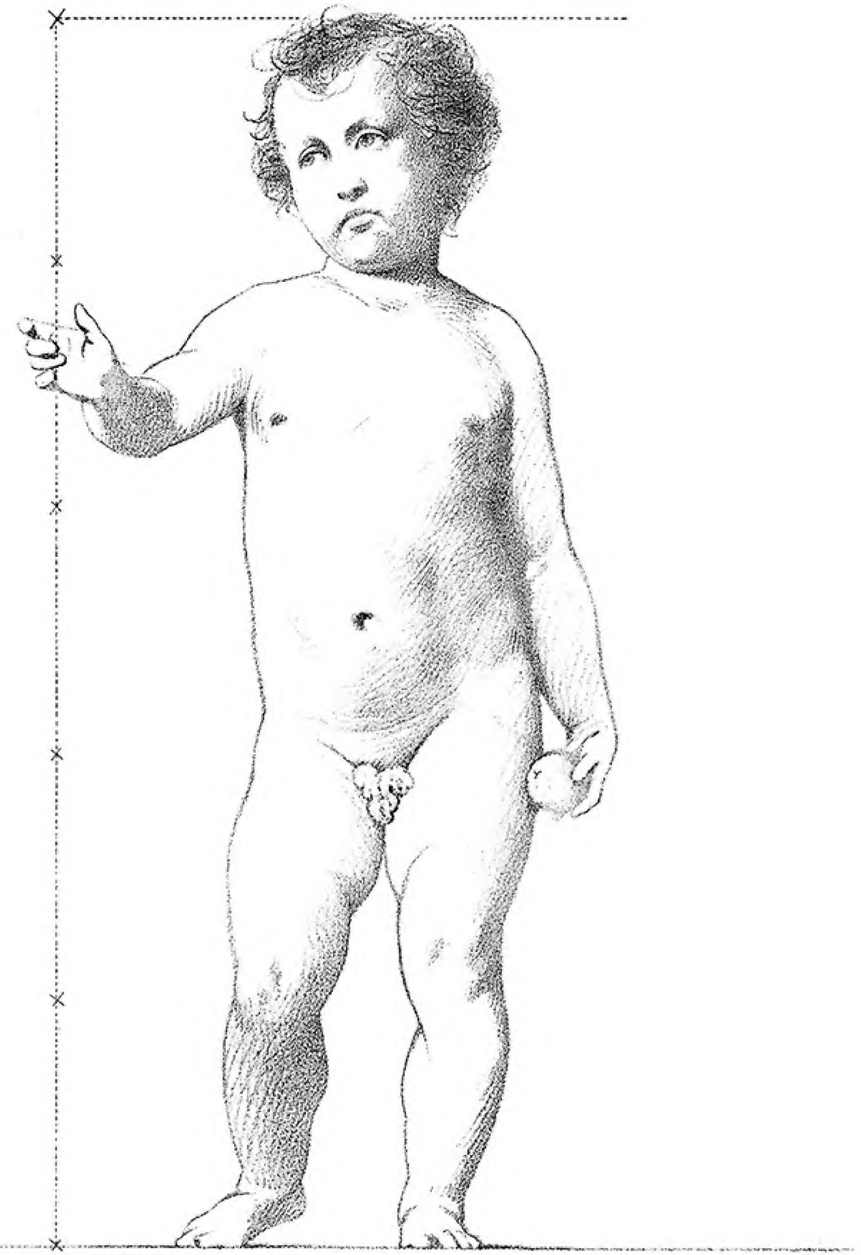
5. The shoulders and the pelvis are the width of a head's length each.

Key:

A. Width of shoulders
B. Anterior extremity of the pelvis
C. Width of pelvis is one head's length
D. Knee cap



Layout and block-in of the figure on the right.



Value massing of figure on the left.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris

Key:

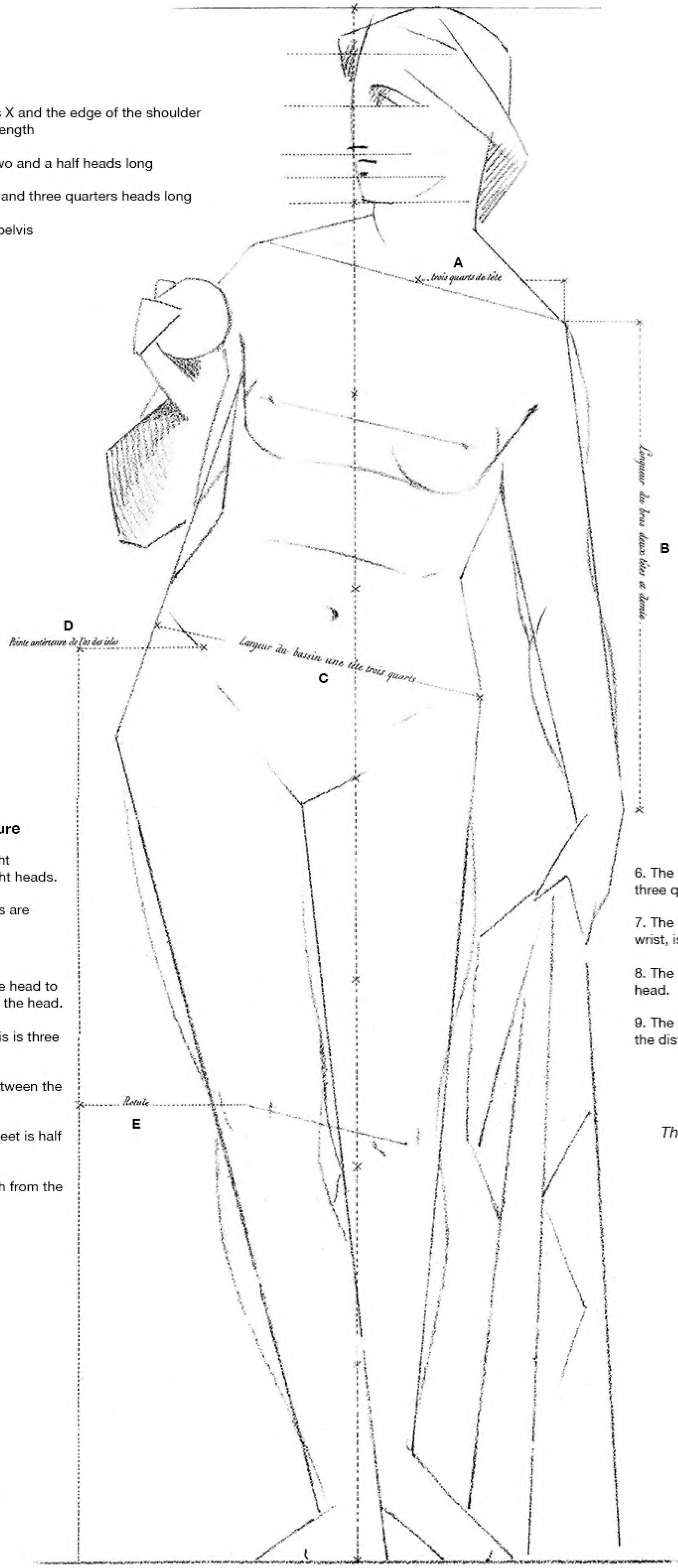
A. The distance between this X and the edge of the shoulder is three quarters of a heads length

B. The length of the arm is two and a half heads long

C. The width of pelvis is one and three quarters heads long

D. Anterior extremity of the pelvis

E. Knee cap



Canon of the Female Figure

- The female figure has the same height proportions as the male figure, i.e. eight heads.

- The width of the shoulders and pelvis are the only differences.

---

1. The female torso, from the top of the head to the genitals, is four times the length of the head.

2. From the top of the skull to the pelvis is three and a quarter head lengths.

3. The knee cap is situated halfway between the pelvis and the ground.

4. The point where the two clavicles meet is half a head's length from the chin.

5. It is three quarters of a head's length from the sternum to each shoulder.

6. The pelvis (as seen from the front) is one and three quarters of a head's length.

7. The length of the arm, from the shoulder to the wrist, is two and a half head lengths.

8. The length of the hand is three quarters of the head.

9. The length of the foot (as seen in profile) is half the distance between the knee cap and the ground.

Nature offers infinite variants.
The present study recommends the traditional canon of beauty.

This Plate is the layout, in line, of the block-in figure of Plate 21 and the modeled figure in Plate 24.

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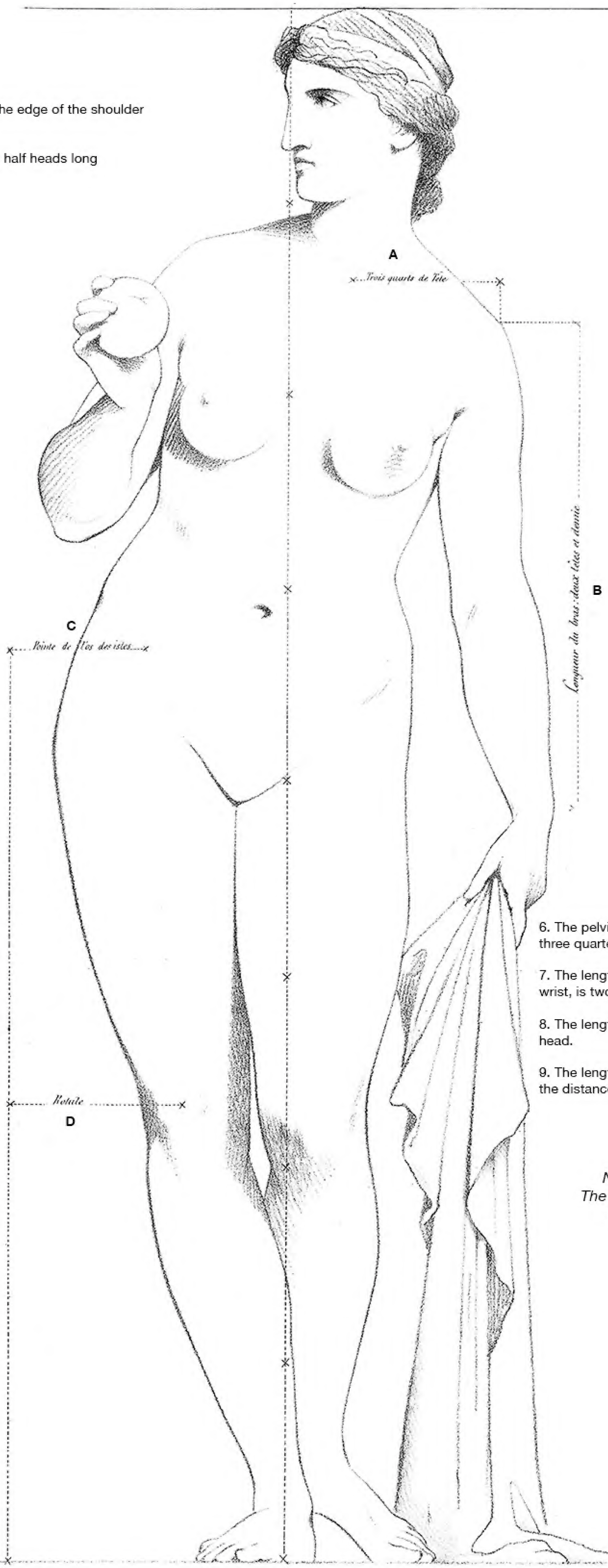
Key:

A. The distance between this X and the edge of the shoulder is three quarters of a heads length

B. The length of the arm is two and a half heads long

C. Anterior extremity of the pelvis

D. Knee cap



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Block-in of the layout figure in Plate 22 and the modeled figure in Plate 24.

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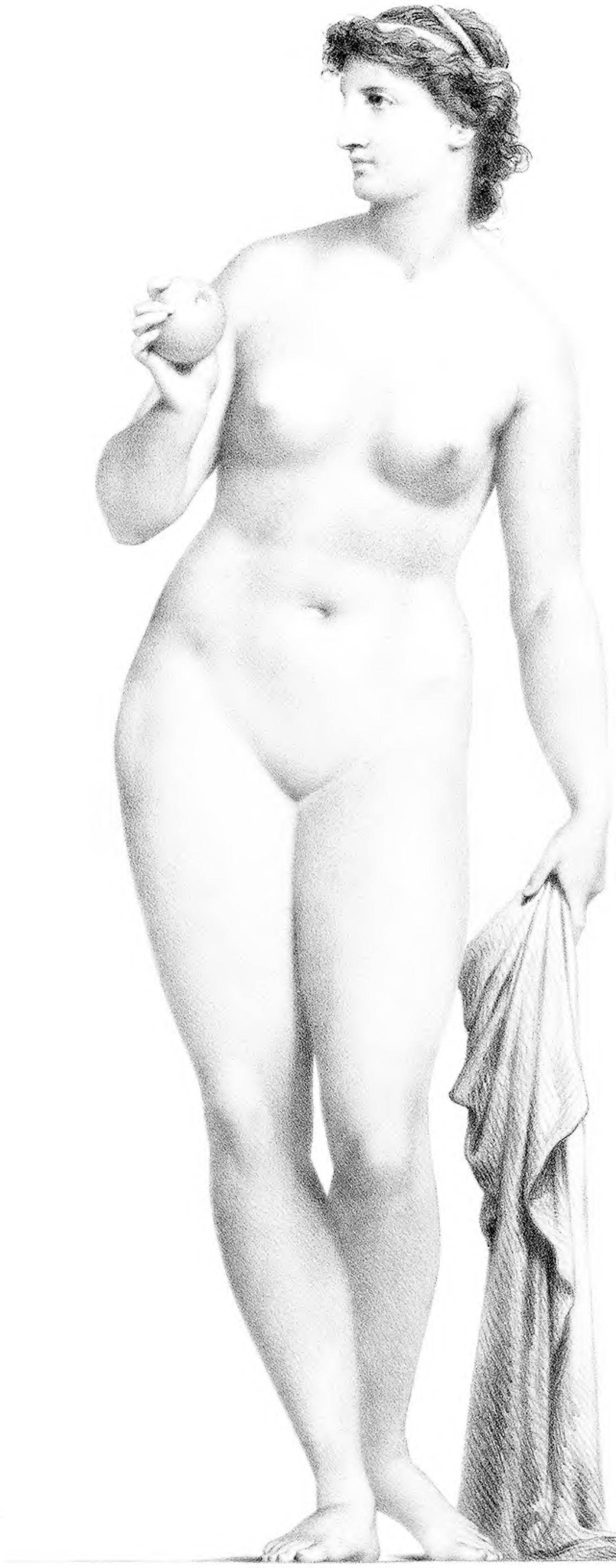

Block-in of the layout figure in Plate 22 and the modeled figure in Plate 24.

Imp. Lemercier et Cie Paris